



## MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

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**Contact:** Rudy Jurgensen  
Public Affairs Manager  
(650) 691-1200

# ECOLOGICAL GRAZING COMING TO TUNITAS CREEK

## *-- Coastside Rancher To Conduct Grazing Operation --*

LOS ALTOS, CA [April 1, 2008] – Last Wednesday night, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Board of Directors voted unanimously to award a five-year grazing lease for its Tunitas Creek property to local coastside rancher Doug Edwards. Mr. Edwards has been running a year-round cow-calf operation on the property since July 2005 under a year-to-year lease with the previous landowner.

The 708-acre Tunitas Creek property is tucked into the San Mateo coastal hillside about eight miles south of Half Moon Bay. The property was purchased by the District in February 2007 from the Peninsula Open Space Trust.

Mr. Edwards is a local grazing operator with years of experience in ranching on the San Mateo County coast. The District's Coastside Protection Program commits the agency to working with current operators of agricultural lands provided that the operator has a willingness to support the District's public use and resource management goals.

The District's grazing management plan for the Tunitas Creek property is a guide to conservation grazing that is tailored to suit the resource management needs of the land. Conservation grazing is the use of livestock grazing as a management tool for enhancing the diversity of native plant and animal communities, controlling the spread of invasive, non-native plants, and managing vegetative fuel for fire prevention. The continuation of grazing on the Tunitas Creek property is also consistent with the goals of District's Grazing Policy, which include helping sustain the local agricultural economy and fostering appreciation for the region's rural agricultural heritage. The continuation of grazing on the property through the prescriptions in the grazing management plan is supported by the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee.

This is the second grazing lease awarded by the District in the past year. Last December a five-year grazing lease was awarded to local rancher Vince Fontana for the former Big Dipper Ranch at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve.

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*Created by voters more than 35 years ago, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has successfully protected and managed nearly 56,000 acres of open space. The public enjoys the District's diverse and beautiful preserves 365 days a year. The District is an independent, non-enterprise, California special district whose mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)*